

31 January 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Actions and Views of Secretary Laird

1. At our 31 January session, Secretary Laird evinced considerable interest in what you planned to say in your briefing at the NSC meeting scheduled for 1500 that afternoon (31 January). I gave him its general gist, explaining in the process how it was structured to be complementary to the military briefing that we understood Admiral Moorer was to give. Laird seemed to agree with, and was pleased by, the line you intended to take.

2. While we were talking, word came that the 31 January NSC had been cancelled. Laird then explained that, as he understood it, the NSC session had been called for two reasons: (1) to have a general bidding review on Indochina in light of the past week's developments; (2) to give Admiral Moorer a forum for briefing the actions that had been taken by Laird (sic) -- i. e., the instructions sent by Laird to Abrams (ditto) -- in response to the Abrams cable requesting six new authorizations, the cable considered at the 24 January SRG. Laird gave me a private copy (attached) of his memorandum to Kissinger on this matter. As you will note, Abrams got part -- but not all -- of what he (or the 7th Air Force) was asking for.

3. One point not conveyed in the memorandum but relayed to me orally by Laird is the fact that the Navy, on instructions, has stationed ship(s) off the North Vietnam coast equipped with TALOS missiles. These are to be fired at MIGs engaging in hostile actions -- the latter being defined as (a) crossing into Laos (or South Vietnam) and/or (b) engaging any U.S. aircraft with what appears to be hostile intent. I asked if a TALOS fired from a ship off North Vietnam could hit a MIG over Laos. Laird said it could. He also explained that any MIG (or other North Vietnamese aircraft) that engaged in hostile action (as defined above) was fair game from then on until it landed back in North Vietnam.

4. Laird warmly endorsed the cable on Long Tieng defense which Bill Nelson drafted and we discussed after the Executive Committee meeting on 28 January. He said the views expressed and actions recommended therein were first rate and just right. Similar opinions were spontaneously expressed by General Stilwell, with whom I had a pleasant and useful lunch after my session with Laird.

5. I am sending a copy of this memorandum and its attachment to Mr. Nelson but will make no further distribution of either unless or until you so direct.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

TS 198536/72/1 - "The Current Situation in SVN (U)", dated 26 January 1972

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Copy No. 1 - The Director -   
Copy No. 2 - C/FE  
Copy No. 3 - SAVA  
Copy No. 4 - SAVA  
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- DOD Special Projects  
1 - GAC Chrono ✓  
1 - Memos TO & FROM the DCI

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